

IMPERIAL INSURANCE OFFICE,
THREADNEEDLE-STREET, CITY.

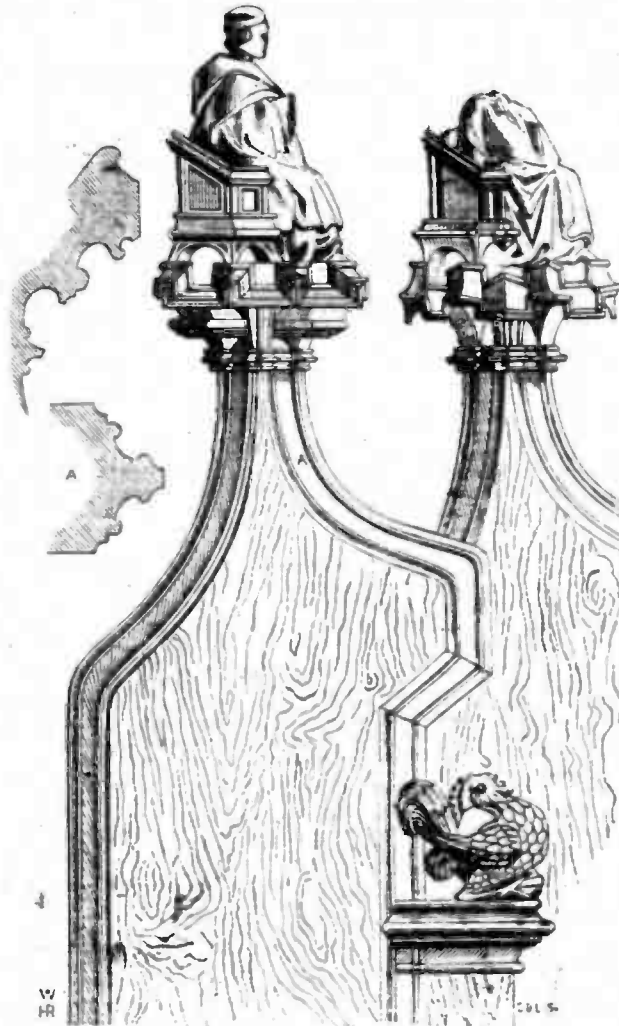
THE accompanying engraving represents a building, now nearly completed, which has been erected at the corner of Threadneedle-street, nearly adjoining the Hall of Commerce, for the "Imperial Insurance Company." The ground on which it stands is angular, and our view shews the longer side of the edifice in the return street. Next week we shall give some particulars of the structure.

STALL-ENDS, LANDBEACH CHURCH,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

AMONGST the great patrons of art whom the middle ages produced, few appear more worthy of celebrity than John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, whose rebus is seen on the arm-rest of the accompanying bench-ends now in St. Peter's Church, Landbeach, but which were originally in the chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge. At the suppression of the convent of St. Radegund, Cambridge, in the 12th year of King Henry VII., the munificence of this splendid prelate converted it into a college, which he dedicated to St. Mary, St. John, and the virgin St. Radegund; and this edifice, which combines some of the choicest examples of Early English architecture with much of the profuse decoration of the end of the 15th century, now forms, under the name of Jesus College, one of the purest architectural gems which ornament the banks of the Cam. The small but beautiful chapel at the east end of Ely Cathedral, and known as Alcock's Chapel, is, from its elaboration, a still more princely monument to his memory; but Landbeach Church, though of less pretension than either of the works which have been alluded to, recalls with agreeable associations the name of this amiable bishop, whose piety was so great, that an eulogium was even passed on him by Bale, who was warmly devoted to art, literature, and devotion, and united in his long discourses profound learning and impressive ardour. An elegant carved oak door which Landbeach Church once contained has been removed to Ely Cathedral, but the stalls remain in their original condition, excepting that a coat of white paint (about, however, to be removed) in some degree mars the general effect. The arm-rests are all fashioned into the rebus of a cock standing upon a ball; but the poppy-heads, which are all various, contain figures of bishops, priests, and acolyths, seated in chairs, and supported by battlements of extreme intricacy. Of the latter, two specimens are here given, one of them somewhat mutilated, the other more than ordinarily well-preserved. These examples with much propriety are now being copied in carved oak as stalls for the fellows and undergraduates of Jesus College, in the restorations and improvements which have already been announced as taking place in that memorable building.

ENGRAVING OF THE NEW PALACE AT WESTMINSTER.—We lately observed in the shop windows a large print of the New Houses of Parliament, and wondered as we looked at the great tower and other parts of the structure, whether the representation there given was really what the architect meant to carry out. The following letter from Mr. Barry has eased us considerably:—"Sir: "Having observed in several of the print-shops an engraving prepared and published, without my knowledge, by Mr. T. H. Ellis, of Jewin-street, purporting to be a view of the New Palace at Westminster, with the Towers now in progress, I feel myself called upon to state publicly that the representations of the towers in that engraving are altogether at variance with the design adopted for them, and that the view is in other respects very inaccurate. I venture to hope, therefore, that by the insertion of this letter in your valuable and widely-extended publication, you will do me the favour to assist me in denouncing, especially, the representation of the towers in this engraving, as a gross caricature of the most important features of my design for the New Palace at Westminster."—I am, Sir, &c., C. B. Westminster, May 23, 1848.

STALLS—LANDBEACH CHURCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.



CRITICISM OF ARCHITECTS.

WANT OF DEFERENCE FOR THE OPINIONS OF ARCHITECTS—AMONGST THE PUBLIC—AMONGST PROPRIETORS.

IN the present position of architecture as an art, there is much that must occasion pain to those who mingle any love of it with its practice as a profession. Provided architects are fully competent to the development of their art, and properly qualified for that end by a knowledge of principles and forms already educated, there should exist, amongst the public, great deference for their opinions on all matters of taste, and perfect confidence in their ability to produce beautiful works. But this state is very far from characteristic of the public. It has so little manifested itself amongst students, as to have led to the admirable remarks of Professor Cockerell in his last lecture. The architect himself, when criticising the works of his contemporaries, is, like these, too liable to commit injustice. He, at least, ought to know how numerous are the points in which the mere construction, form, and detail of a building may be influenced, how these, in many cases, dictate in the design, and that, ere the merit of a work can be properly appreciated, something like the same amount of attention to the circumstances of the case may be expected from the critic, as was devoted by the designer. How constantly do we hear this or that building condemned for peculiarities of arrangement, or decorative

treatment, which a mere representation of facts and reasons would convert into beauties. It is true, as it has been said in an article in *THE BUILDER*, that the critic will require some show of reason for preferring, in each case, the form there employed, to others which may exist, but still there should be great deference to the opinion of that individual who has had the best opportunity of arriving at a matured decision—namely, the designer himself.

The architect should eschew that unfounded, or hasty vituperation, in which ignorance and impertinence are about equally blended: from his knowledge of the difficulties and responsibilities of his vocation, it should give him pride to admit the excellence which others are unable to appreciate. He should consider what were the circumstances of situation and plan, what were the other considerations exacted, and then, and not earlier, say if the forms and character of decoration employed be such as there is reason in the use of, in variety and in intrinsic beauty, compared with other forms with which the architect is familiar. His knowledge of the whole history of architecture, of the several forms which each style has given to material, places him so far above the general public in the ability to judge of the merit of a work. But in omitting to consider the data on which the design was founded, he is guilty, not only of injustice to his brother professor, but of a method of criticism which, in one who makes the art his profession, is productive of the most injurious results.